

BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20268-0001

Competitive Product Prices
Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service
Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29

Docket No. MC2016-188

Competitive Product Prices
Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29
(MC2016-188)
Negotiated Service Agreement

Docket No. CP2016-271

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS ON
POSTAL SERVICE REQUEST TO ADD PRIORITY MAIL & FIRST-CLASS PACKAGE
SERVICE CONTRACT 29 TO THE COMPETITIVE PRODUCT LIST

(September 13, 2016)

The Public Representative hereby provides comments pursuant to the Commission's Notice Initiating Dockets.¹ In that Order, the Commission established the above referenced docket to receive comments from interested persons, including the undersigned Public Representative, on a Postal Service Request to add Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 to the competitive product list.² The Postal Service's Request includes a Statement of Supporting Justification, a certification of compliance with 39 U.S.C. § 3633(a), and a copy of Governor's Decision No. 11-6. The Postal Service also filed (under seal) a contract related to the proposed new product, and supporting financial data.

According to the Postal Service, Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 is a competitive product "not of general applicability" within the meaning of 39 U.S.C. § 3632(b)(3). *Request* at 1. The Postal Service also maintains that the prices and classification underlying the instant contract are supported by Governors' Decision

¹ Notice Initiating Docket(s) for Recent Postal Service Negotiated Service Agreement Filings, September 6, 2016.

² Request of the United States Postal Service to Add Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 to Competitive Product List and Notice of Filing (Under Seal) of Unredacted Governors' Decision, Contract, and Supporting Data, September 2, 2016 (Request).

No. 11-6.³ The Postal Service further asserts that the Statement of Supporting Justification provides support for adding Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 to the competitive product list and the compliance of the contract with 39 U.S.C. § 3633(a). Request at 2.

The contract's effective date will be set two (2) business days following the date on which the Commission issues all necessary regulatory approval. *Attachment B* at 5 (Article II). The contract is to expire three (3) years from the effective date, unless 1) terminated by either Party within 30 days' notice with applicable restrictions, (2) renewed by mutual agreement in writing, (3) superseded by a subsequent Agreement between the Parties, (4) ordered by the Commission or a court, or (5) required to comply with subsequently enacted legislation. *Id.* Attachment B at 5 (Article III).

COMMENTS

The Public Representative has reviewed the Postal Service's Request, the Statement of Supporting Justification, and financial data filed under seal that accompanies the Postal Service's Request. Based upon that review, the Public Representative concludes that Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 should be classified as a competitive product and added to the competitive product list. In addition, it appears that Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 should generate sufficient revenues to cover costs during the first year and thereby satisfy 39 U.S.C. § 3633(a).

Product List Assignment. Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 3642, the Postal Service requests that Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 be added to the competitive product list. 39 U.S.C. § 3642 requires the Commission to consider whether "the Postal Service exercises sufficient market power that it can effectively set the price of such product substantially above costs, raise prices significantly, decrease quality, or decrease output, without risk of losing a significant level of business to other firms offering similar products." 39 U.S.C. § 3642(b)(1). Products over which the Postal

³ Decision of the Governors of the United States Postal Service on Establishment of Domestic Competitive Agreements, Outbound International Competitive Agreements, Inbound International Competitive Agreements, and Other Non-Published Competitive Rates, March 22, 2011 (Governors' Decision No. 11-6).

Service exercises such power are categorized as market dominant while all others are categorized as competitive.

The Postal Service makes a number of assertions that address the considerations of section 3642(b)(1). Request, Attachment D, at 2. Based upon these assertions, the Public Representative concludes that the Postal Service's Request to add Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 to the competitive product list is appropriate.

Requirements of 39 U.S.C. § 3633. Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. § 3633(a), the Postal Service's competitive prices must not result in the subsidization of competitive products by market dominant products; ensure that each competitive product will cover its attributable costs; and, ensure that all competitive products collectively contribute an appropriate share of the institutional costs of the Postal Service. Based upon a review of the financial data, the negotiated prices for Priority Mail & First-Class Package Service Contract 29 should generate sufficient revenues to cover costs during the first year of the contract and therefore meet the requirements of 39 U.S.C. § 3633(a).

As noted above, the contract is expected to remain in effect for a period of 3 years. The Postal Service provides no data to demonstrate that the contract will comply with the requirements of 39 U.S.C. § 3633(a) during years 2 and 3. However, the concern is mitigated by the fact that the terms of the contract allow for an annual adjustment in the negotiated rates that should permit revenues to cover costs in years 2 and 3. Furthermore, the Commission has an opportunity to review the financial results of the contract for compliance with U.S.C. § 3633(a) each year in the Annual Compliance Determination.

The Public Representative respectfully submits the foregoing comments for the Commission's consideration.

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